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Letter dated 26 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the occasion of the launching of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 25 May 2004, issued on 25 May 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

04-37415 (E) 040604

Annex to the letter dated 26 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the occasion of the launching of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 25 May 2004, issued on 25 May 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The Eutopean Union salutes the African Union on the historic occasion of the solemn launching of the Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa on this Africa Day, 25 May 2004. The European Union warmly welcomes the establishment of this new institution, which has been conceived with a view to equipping the African Union with a more robust and proactive mechanism to deal with peace and security issues in Africa. The European Union also congratulates the Federal Republic of Nigeria on its assumption of the chairmanship of the Peace and Security Council.

The major progress which Africa has made in addressing conflicts on the continent and developing an institutional capacity to deal with conflict prevention and resolution has been impressive. The establishment of the Peace and Security Council is central to this response and demonstrates Africa's determination to take the lead in strengthening its own conflict prevention and management efforts. The European Union is equally determined to work with Africa in supporting this important institutional development and helping to build up African capabilities for addressing and resolving conflicts, including through deployment of African peacekeeping missions. The European Union African Peace Facility, which becomes operational today, will provide the context for developing and strengthening the already strong practical cooperation between the European Union and Africa in the crucial task of preventing and responding to conflict on the continent.

The Peace and Security Council is faced with major responsibilities as it begins its work. The European Union is confident that it can respond effectively to these challenges. The Peace and Security Council and its members will carry with them the good wishes of all concerned for the future of Africa as they formally assume their responsibilities.

The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.